

BRIEFS

MLK50 CONFERENCE TOPS 1M STREAMING

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Live video streaming April 3-4 of MLK50, the evangelical Christian conference memorializing Martin Luther King Jr. on the 50th anniversary of his assassination, surpassed one million viewers in addition to the 4,000 people at the Memphis Convention Center for the event sponsored by the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville and The Gospel Coalition. Video of the conference's keynote sessions, as well as audio or video of the breakout sessions, is available by visiting thegospelcoalition.org/conference/mlk50/.

LOTTIE OFFERING, CP LOOKING UP FOR IMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists' support for international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is 4.4% ahead of last year's pace, according to a report by Rodney Freeman, treasurer/vice president of support services at Southern Baptists' International Mission Board (IMB). At the end of March, IMB had received \$124,093,278 for the 2017-2018 campaign which runs Oct. 1 - Sept. 30. The total is \$5,225,589 ahead of receipts at this point last year. IMB has also received \$50,776,311 in Cooperative Program gifts for the fiscal year, 2.4%, ahead of last year.

MIDWESTERN SEMINARY TO HONOR C. SPURGEON

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP and local reports) — Midwestern Seminary's trustees have voted to change the name of the undergraduate arm of the Southern Baptist seminary in Kansas City, Mo., from Midwestern College to Spurgeon College to honor Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), the British Baptist preacher, author, and hymn writer many consider to have had one of the foremost Christian minds of modern times. The seminary already owns Spurgeon's library of 6,000-plus books and various artifacts from his ministry, including his "preaching rail," or pulpit, from Spurgeon's College in London.

Church discipline lacking

LifeWay Research: Churches 'rarely talk about' how to respond to member misconduct

NASHVILLE (BP) — More than half of Protestant senior pastors surveyed by LifeWay Research say they don't know of a case where someone has been disciplined in their church.

LifeWay Research, the evangelical research of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches, conducted the survey Aug. 30 - Sept. 18 of last year and released the results on April 5.

"It's one of the topics that churches rarely talk about," says Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

Two Bible passages in particular deal with the question of church discipline and how to respond to misconduct by church members.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells his followers to go to offenders in private and ask them to mend their ways. The passage says if that fails, to bring one or two witnesses and, if that fails, then bring the matter to the whole church for discipline. The hope is that wrongdoers will repent and be restored.

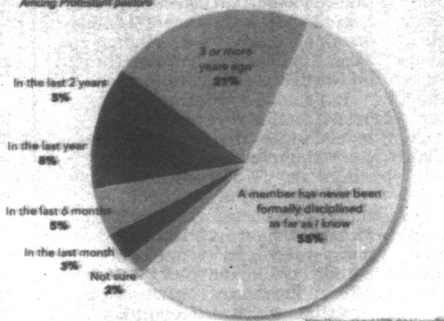
A similar passage in 1 Corinthians tells readers not to associate with someone who claims to be a Christian but "is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler."

McConnell says in general, church discipline would apply when offenders refuse to acknowledge their wrongdoing, persist in it, or are no longer qualified for leadership.

see DISCIPLINE on p. 6

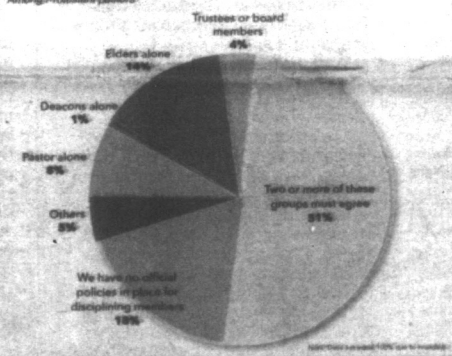
When was the last time your church formally disciplined a member?

Among Protestant pastors



Who at your church is officially responsible for administering church discipline?

Among Protestant pastors



© LIFEWAY

Survey 12/16/17-1/18/18. N=1,000. Margin of error ±3.5%.

IMB begins search for president with noms

RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports) — The International Mission Board (IMB) presidential search committee announced April 12 that nominations are now being accepted for the next president of Southern Baptist's worldwide missions sending agency.

The committee, chaired by Chuck Pourciau, senior pastor of Broadmoor Church in Shreveport, La., said in a statement they will accept nominations through May 15 by email at imbsearch@broadmoor.tv.

Pourciau is a Mississippi College graduate. He previously pastored Centreville Church, Centreville, and First Church, Louisville.

The International Mission Board presidential search committee has benefited greatly from your prayers and input during the early stage of this process," observed the committee's April 12 statement. "We continue to desire your help as we seek the person God has chosen to be the next leader of the IMB. We covet your prayers until this task is done."

On Feb. 12, current IMB president David Platt announced plans to transition out of his role and return to

see IMB on p. 8

Hybels resigning Willow Creek pastorate



LEAVING PULPIT — Bill Hybels, the pastor who grew Willow Creek Community Church into one of the nation's most influential megachurches, stepped down April 10 amid accusations of a pattern of sexual misconduct. He has denied all the allegations. (Photo courtesy of Ian Philpot/English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0)

SOUTH BARRINGTON, Ill. (BP and local reports) — Bill Hybels, the co-founder and senior pastor who grew Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago suburb of North Barrington into one of the nation's most influential megachurches, stepped down April 10 amid allegations of a pattern of sexual misconduct.

Hybels has denied all the accusations, describing some as "misleading" and others as "entirely false." However, in a meeting live-streamed at willowcreek.tv, he told the church: "I too often placed myself in situations that I would have been far wiser to avoid."

Hybels' announcement comes 18 days after the Chicago Tribune published a long but inconclusive account of allegations against him by a handful of former church members. Multiple women told the Tribune they experienced unwanted advances from Hybels.

Hybels told the church on the evening of April 10, "I've been accused of many things I simply did not do." He acknowledged that in some situations, "I communicated things that were perceived in ways

see HYBELS on p. 7

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Not dangerous?

Loyal readers of The Baptist Record learned in last week's issue that the State of Indiana is following the example of Mississippi and clamping down on abortion clinic sanitation and cleanliness/sterility. So many of these purveyors of mass death nationwide have such complete disregard for common-sense health measures and utter contempt for the rules that clinics of other types are expected to follow, that states are finding it necessary to impose laws and regulations specifically covering abortion clinics.

It makes sense in a perverse sort of way that anyone willing to crush flat a newborn's skull upon "accidental" birth is apt to treat living patients with the same level of sociopathy. That is inarguable.

Remember Kermit Gosnell? The Philadelphia, Pa., physician and abortion clinic owner who severed and collected the tiny feet of aborted infants? He managed his clinic so poorly that inspectors documented cat feces in open view around the clinic and bloody recovery recliners for his post-abortion patients to use. Sink drains in the clinic were clogged with baby parts.

Gosnell himself was convicted of three counts of murder and one count of manslaughter that prosecutors uncovered at the clinic. There were likely many more. Investigators referred to Gosnell's operation as a "baby charnel house."

An example of the twisted rationalizations surrounding the abortion business is Mississippi's premier abortion provider, physician Willie Parker, who wrote in the October 2017 issue of Teen Vogue magazine, "As an obstetrician-gynecologist who provides abortion care and a man of Christian faith, I believe the most important thing you can do for another human being is to help them in their time of need."

Put another way, Parker seems to be saying that the God of his Christian faith excuses his conduct at the abortion clinic in Jackson because it falls under the Christian definition of humanitarianism. He recently took the opportunity to spread that apostasy in a speech at one of Mississippi's public universities, and would probably accept such opportunities in the future.

Indiana, like Mississippi, has experienced a decline in both abor-

tions and abortion clinics statewide over the past several years. There are six such clinics left in Indiana. Mississippi has one abortion clinic, on North State Street in Jackson.

Indiana, like Mississippi, has been thwarted several times by federal judges when the two states have attempted to bring abortion clinics into the 21st century.

Comes now Sue Errington, an Indiana Democrat legislator from Muncie and formerly the public policy director for Planned Parenthood of Indiana (for 17 years). After ratification of the new law in that state, which also requires all medical doctors to report treatments of women for abortion complications, she was quoted in local media as complaining, "It seems to me that this is an attempt to make this appear like a dangerous procedure, and it's not."

Well, Rep. Errington, that all depends on whose spinal cord is being severed. To the full-term infants who were born alive and had to endure Gosnell's deep, excruciating stab to the backs of their necks, it is a dangerous procedure. To the babies being fearfully and wonderfully knitted together in the secret place (Psalm 134:13-16), Parker's skillful use of his cannula is a dangerous procedure.

There's a photograph that has recently gone viral on social media. It depicts a Brazilian man, outside in some unidentified city of that South American country, bending over a bucket of water and gently washing an infant. The accompanying text explains the child is the victim of an abortion that the man had discovered in the trash behind a clinic.

Spread out before the man in the photograph, on a wide plastic tarpaulin, are the broken bodies of dozens more babies that were headed to a landfill with the rest of the clinic's garbage of the day. The man in the photograph is lovingly bathing every baby, every severed arm and leg and head, in preparation of a proper burial for each one of them.

No doubt, this good man will be scarred deep inside for life for the act of decency he felt compelled to perform, just like the seared consciences of so many of the mothers and fathers of those discarded children.

Yes, Rep. Errington, it is indeed a dangerous procedure, and in more ways than one.

Reasons to go

When the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) comes to Dallas this summer for its annual meeting, it will do so for the second time since 1985—the largest convention meeting ever.

I've attended SBC meetings regularly since 1982, when I was 27 years old. Here are a few reasons you should make it a priority to attend the SBC's annual meetings:

Ownership

This is not the most fun reason for attending but it is the essential reason we meet every year. The messengers from the churches, gathered during two days each June, have authority over everything our institutions and missionary boards do for the remaining 363 days. We approve their budgets, assign them trustees and give instructions through motions to those who serve our churches.

Education

If you're a Southern Baptist, you learn things at our annual meeting that you won't learn elsewhere. Sure, you'll hear good preaching and even get some free books if you plan your week right, but also you'll see some things that will challenge you.

The reports of our institutions are the stories of people—pastors, church planters, missionaries, Sunday School teachers, choir members, widows, and others enriched and trained by the work you support. The Cooperative Program is not just a boring fundraising effort in this narrative; it is the lifeblood of a broad and effective missionary enterprise.

You'll also see, as I did at my first meeting, pastors and church members who are diverse racially, culturally, and generationally. Few niche meetings you attend will hit all those marks. It's hard to maintain some prejudices of your brother and sister Baptists after seeing us together. There are a lot of meetings you can attend where your particular affinity or interest is the entire agenda. I find it enlightening to occasionally hang out with people I don't understand very well.

Encouragement

This is a big reason for most conferences. The SBC always features solid preaching, chances to talk with ministry specialists, and even a health screening station to encourage you avoid Tex-Mex and barbecue. It's hard to come back from the SBC



Guest opinion
with Gary Ledbetter

without being spiritually and professionally challenged at least once.

Fellowship

Hallway meetings, alumni meetings, side meetings, luncheons—we have those in abundance. I always see friends from my former ministries as well as people who live across town but whom I see only at the convention. This benefit is not unique to our Southern Baptist meetings, but you won't miss out on chances to make and renew friendships as you attend our meetings. This aspect has grown in recent years with the addition of different affinity group meetings and meals. For many of us, fellowship is the most memorable aspect of Southern Baptist meetings.

Do you find other Southern Baptists, or the general collection of us, uninteresting? I get it; most of us are not very cool but do you love the seminary that trained you or your pastor? For most of you, that seminary wouldn't/won't be here without the SBC. Do you love the International Mission Board more than you do the rest of the convention? Not even the IMB would/ will be around without the SBC.

You can be conservative, an expository preacher, missional as all get out, and lead your church well without being a Southern Baptist, though it would be hard. Join us in Dallas on June 10-13 or some portion of those days, especially if you've never been before.

You'll come away understanding a bit more of what "Southern Baptist" means for your ministry. I guarantee it.

Ledbetter is editor of the Southern Baptist TEXAN (texanonline.net), news journal of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention where this column first appeared. It appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and length.

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Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

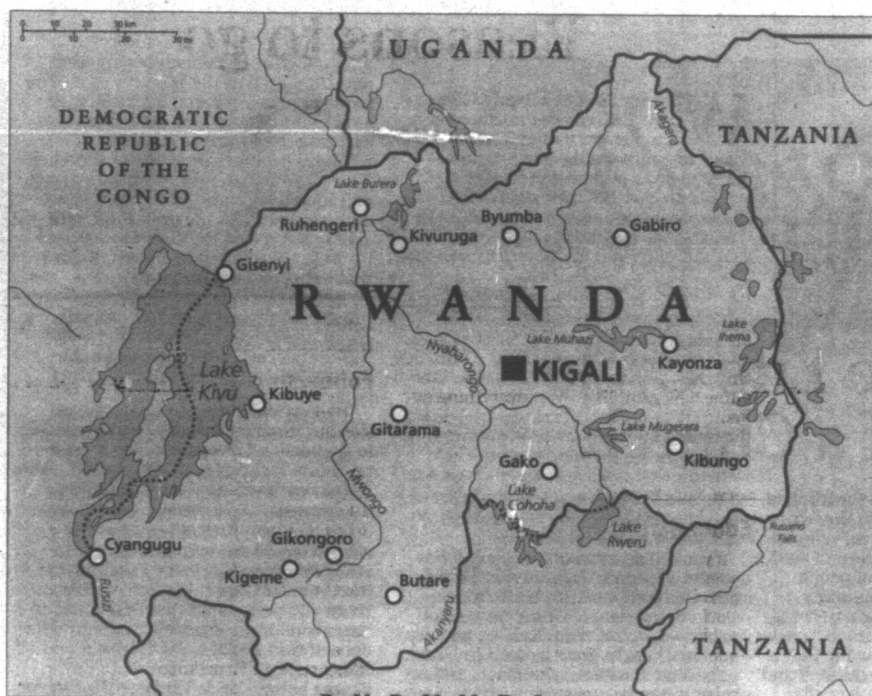
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SOUTHERN BAPTIST

VOLUME 142 • NUMBER 16 • ISSN-0005-5778

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items— one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising— two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



Rwanda closes 6,000 churches, arrests pastors in crackdown

KIGALI, Rwanda (BP) — An estimated 6,000 churches have been closed across Rwanda and six pastors arrested in a government crackdown that began March 1 with 700 closures in the nation's capital of Kigali, according to news reports.

The six pastors, who reportedly tried to rally public support for the churches in Kigali, were accused of "masterminding" a plot to disobey the government, the BBC reported March 6.

The closures come as the Rwanda Governance Board (RGO) conducts a national review of proposed new regulations controlling faith-based institutions, including requirements that pastors have theological education and that buildings have two bathrooms each for men and women, according to World Watch Monitor.

Since the Kigali closures began in March, government actions against churches have expanded across the nation to include 6,000 churches accused of not meeting certain structural and pollution regulations, the Associated Press (AP) reported on April 4, based on reports from Kigali.

Most closures involve Pentecostal churches but also include dozens of mosques in the nation of 12 million people, the vast majority of them Christian.

The nation has too many churches, Rwandan President Paul Kagame said after the initial closings.

"Are these boreholes [deep wells] that give people water?" he said to news reporters regarding the 700 churches closed in the capital of Kigali, where 1,400 churches were serving a population of 1.3 million. "I don't think we have as many boreholes. Do we even have as many factories? This has been a mess!"

The churches and houses of worship were closed for not complying with building regulations, safety and hygiene standards, and pollution limitations. Many of the Kigali churches were reopened after inspections, according to news reports, but the number of churches that remain closed to date is not known.

RGO head Anastase Shyaka told the AP the list of closures is "still being compiled." "The prayer houses were found in such poor physical conditions, and we are not targeting any religion," Shyaka told the AP. "We are closing prayer houses of all different denominations and asking them to meet existing health and safety standards for their followers."

Some of the closed churches were operating without government permits which must be renewed annually, Shvaka said.

The new regulations the RGO is studying are expected to make

it more difficult for churches to open and operate.

Among the RGO concerns, some preachers "deceive their congregation with misleading sermons," Shyaka has said in media reports. In February, Rwanda suspended a Christian radio station that aired a sermon the government viewed as "hateful" towards women, News 24 reported Feb. 28.

Religious and community leaders have expressed varying views of the closures, with some accusing the government of interfering with religious liberty, and others saying the closures are justified for safety concerns.

"Government efforts to have churches build better structures are welcome to all of us," Esron Maniragaba, president of the Evangelical Free Church of Rwanda, told AP.

Innocent Nyezimana, a bishop and president of the Churches' Forum, accused the government of being extreme.

"Those that failed to implement a few requirements should be reopened and allowed to work while fixing the problems raised," the AFP quoted Nzeyimana in March.

According to the nation's 2012 census, Rwanda's population is 44% Catholic; 37.9% Protestant; and 11.9% Seventh-day Adventist. Among smaller groups represented are Muslims at two percent, and .7% Jehovah's Witnesses.

Posthumous conception raises a 'host of ethical issues' in legal debate

NASHVILLE (BP) — The legal and moral propriety of conceiving a child with a dead person's reproductive material is among the latest hot topics in bioethics.

In Ireland, legislation is under consideration that would permit reproductive cells from deceased individuals to be used by their spouses or partners to conceive children posthumously, according to media reports.

The Irish legislature's Joint Committee on Health discussed the bill once in January and again in February, a spokesperson for the legislature told Baptist Press. A final bill could be drafted in the coming months and put before parliament for debate.

Health Committee chairman Michael Harty said in a news release, "Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) is becoming increasingly important in Ireland and measures must be put in place to protect parents, donors, surrogates, and crucially, the children born through AHR."

The posthumous conception legislation, which is part of a broader bill, would require children of the procedure to be carried in the womb of a surviving female partner in the relationship, according to an online commentary by Denver attorney Ellen Trachman, who specializes in reproductive technology law.

Posthumous conception has also been considered by lawmakers and courts in the United States, Canada, and Israel.

Southern Baptist bioethicist C. Ben Mitchell, Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tn., said posthumous conception raises a host of ethical issues.

"There is no moral duty to use the sperm of a deceased

husband or the eggs of a deceased wife," Mitchell told Baptist Press via email, "and intentionally bringing a child into the world with only a single parent raises a host of ethical issues, not to mention a host of psychological, emotional, and relational issues for that child."

Frozen sperm can be used later via artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization (IVF). Frozen eggs can be used to conceive a child through IVF. Following IVF, the resultant embryo must implant in a woman's womb. The mother can be either the biological mother or a surrogate.

Sperm and eggs can be donated prior to death or extracted from a corpse shortly following death, according to the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*.

In Israel, approximately 5,000 young adults have established "biological wills" stating they want their eggs or sperm frozen and used to conceive offspring if they die before having children. Der Spiegel reported March 28. Some posthumously conceived children have been born in Israel and elsewhere, according to media reports.

Posthumous conception also has emerged in the U.S. and Canada, including the 2016 birth of a New York police detective's daughter two and a half years following her father's murder, the Irish Examiner reported. The night the detective was murdered, his wife of three months requested that sperm be extracted from his body and preserved.

U.S. law "lacks any clear uniform rules" regarding posthumous conception "but generally permits post-death reproduction with specific consent in place," Trachman wrote.

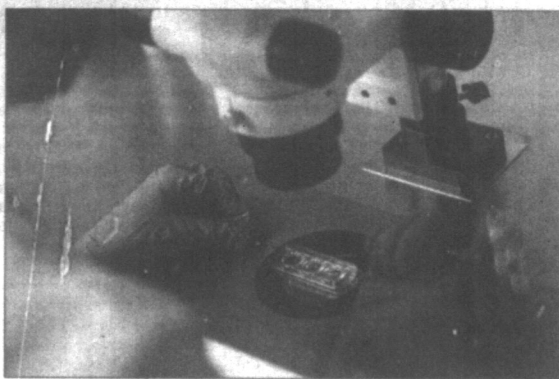


Photo by bezikus/Shutterstock.com

According to Jesus, the church is not only significant; it is vitally important. In fact, as you see Him establish the church, you come to realize that it is the most significant institution on the planet. This gathering of born-again, transformed people reaching out to tell the Good News of Jesus was started by Him and will be rescued one day by Him. In Matthew 16 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The church building is not just to meet in, but for taking transformed new lives and putting them together with other transformed lives and creating a fellowship that literally is a force to move against everything that Satan would move toward. According to that verse, Satan is on the defensive.

Gates and walls are put in place as defensive measures, and the church is to be on the march. At times it seems as though it gets turned around and the church is on the defensive and the world seems to be marching against everything that used to be sacred, good, and right in our lives and society. Still, Jesus' words are true and He established the church, and it will be in place until He comes again to catch it away. Jesus is the founder of the church, the financier of the church, the foundation of the church, and the force that literally keeps it intact.

Do you remember in school when you had to study in some biology-related course what is going on in the life cycle of some bug or insect from the time they are hatched and born, live and die? Let me suggest to you that you can see a life cycle taking place in many churches. In truth, you can mark it down that a church will be alive and well when Jesus comes again. Even though a specific individual church may be going through a downward spiral, that's not all the churches of Jesus. There are other churches that are alive and well, dynamic and moving forward. Since most of us are connected to an individual church, what is taking place in our home body part of Christ in our local church? Let me just suggest for you to think about four stages in the life cycle of a church.

Stage One is the miracle stage. That's where people are coming to know Jesus. New birth is taking place. More births are taking place, and the



The Life Cycle of a Church

wonder and the marvel and the miracle of God bringing a people together to serve Him. It could happen in a church plant. It could happen in a church start. It could happen as a group of people come to recognize their community needs a church and they begin to reach out. Souls are saved. The miracle, a new life, new life from Jesus, new life that is heavenly life, begins to be exhibited and people come to know Christ one after another after another. The numbers increase. The work is strong, and this new church has begun.

What a marvelous time those days are in the life of a church — wondering, praying, hoping, trusting that God will give His strength so that the church would survive, the basic needs of the church will be met, and the miracle will continue to expand. It is a glorious thing to be part of a church during the miracle stage. Thousands of testimonies can be given about what God does in that period when so many people are coming to the Lord, and the church is beginning to come together as the people of God.

Stage Two is what I call the mission stage. It's during this time that the church begins to recognize the church does not exist for the church. The church exists for those outside the church. It is not unusual to see a church begin to struggle, as so many in the church may feel like, "It's my church. These are my programs. This is the way I want it to be." They totally ignore the reality that the reason God has put us

here and left us here is for the folks who need to hear the Good News of Jesus just as we once heard it.

The mission phase of the church is when the people begin to see clearly that God has put them there on mission. Evangelism is vitally important, as people are reached. Raising people, helping them to grow in the Lord, and providing materials, challenge, and inspiration to be mature Christians, growing Christians, Christians who recognize the depth of what Christ wants to do in them and the expansion of what He wants to do in them in touching others for His Kingdom's sake.

The mission phase can be lost. It can become a part of the diminishing of a church as people may reject what had started in their own hearts as they came to new life in Christ but did not share that life with others.

If Phase One and Phase Two diminish, the miracles of new life and new births, if the miracle of missions is lost, Phase Three can become a sad reality. In this stage of the life cycle, the mission has been forgotten, and the miracle can no longer exist.

Phase Three is the museum phase. It's during this time that the church literally exists to think about and look back over their shoulder about what they used to be. Not what they're going to be this coming Sunday. Not what they're going to be in the days ahead with new ideas and new expansion and new programs of reaching peo-

ple for Christ, but remembering what may be shared as the good ole days. The days when mission and miracles were apparent but have long since been lost. The church becomes a museum.

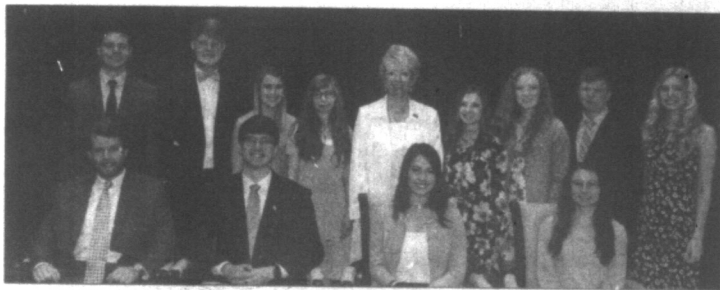
I have been to towns where churches have closed, been taken over by a group, and literally became buildings that are now museums for the presentation of artifacts and experiences of years gone by totally, unrelated to church. Before that happens, sometimes churches enter into the museum phase. You can see what used to be. We can talk about those days but sadly, tragically, the church was never intended to be a museum simply remembering days gone by.

Phase Four is the mausoleum phase. A mausoleum is a large burial chamber, usually above ground, into which people's caskets are placed. Rather than burying in the ground or some other form of burial, it is above ground in small chambers. Sad that a church would come to that time and place that they had lost everything of the vision of Christ that had started them and permeated them. Sad that there is no more dynamic of the presence of God and His Spirit moving in hearts. Sad that there are no more people being won to Christ, called by God to be on mission for Him, celebrating His wonderful presence among them. Now, they are simply relegated to a museum that has turned into a mausoleum and death has come.

It did not come because Jesus is dead. It did not come because Christ has withdrawn His Spirit from us. No, it takes place when we withdraw from Him, when we lose sight of what He wants us to do and where he wants us to be. When we become so removed, isolated, caught up in our own little world that we have no existence other than with our own dying thoughts. This does not need to be. The church does not need to become a museum or a mausoleum. No, it is the living presence of Christ moving in a community and transforming lives because Jesus is there. You and I, if we are in our right spiritual minds, come to the feet of Jesus and say, "Dear Jesus, live among us until the day you come to take us."

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE recently inducted the 2018-2019 Student Body Association officers. Members include (front row, from left) Nolan Bennett of Ripley; Dalton Tudor of New Albany; Michelle Calderon of Lima, Peru; Lydia Reunions of Lawrenceburg, Tenn.; (back row, from left) Logan McCoy of Mantachie; Ed Bender of Olive Branch; Canton Foley of Waterford; Sharissa Smith of Buena Vista, Colo.; BMC President Barbara McMillin; Casey Jo Hollingsworth of Houston; Kelsy McKnatt of Fulton; Michael Graves of Ripley; and Taylor Hollimon of Russellville, Ala.



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE in Clinton will host the 2018 U.S. Intercollegiate Championships in Archery on May 10-13 on the university's Clinton campus. The U.S. Collegiate Archery Association is based in Mission Viejo, Ca.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

April 19, 2018

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

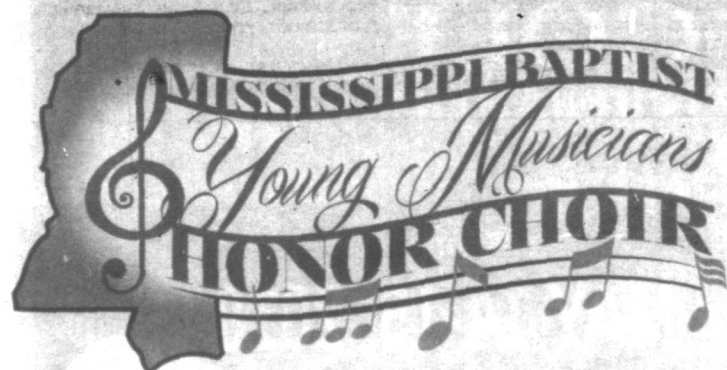
IT'S 2018!



Time to apply for scholarships with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation!

Our policy, deadline, and applications have changed. Please visit our website to review the 2018 policy and submit an application before April 30.

Call us at 601.292.3210 or visit www.msmbaptistfoundation.org for more info.



Young Musicians Honor Choir CONCERT

Saturday, April 21, 2018

6:30 p.m.

Brandon Baptist Church

Contact the Church Music Department at 601-292-3267 for more information.

PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS – SAVE THE DATE

P/LD is excited to host Bivocational Pastors/Wives Dialogue Dinners in 2018! The purpose is to discuss new strategies for resourcing Bivo pastors throughout our state based on 2017 survey results.

Join us at one of the following locations:

April 19 – Grenada

April 26 – Gulfport

For additional information, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at vcclary@mbcb.org or 601-292-3305.



SENIOR ADULT DAY RETREATS

MAY 15
FBC, Tupelo

MAY 17
FBC, Vicksburg

MAY 22
FBC, Columbia

These day retreats are FREE and will go from 12:00-4:00 p.m.

NO REGISTRATION IS NEEDED!

Contact the Discipleship & Family Ministry Department at 601-292-3284 or tpresson@mbcb.org for more information.

MISSISSIPPI MISSIONS MOBILIZATION

CONNECTING • GOSPEL • RELATIONSHIPS

**Make an eternal investment with your
2018 VBS Missions Offering.**

Missions Mobilization of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board invites you to participate in the Home Building Project in Malaysia. For the 8th year in a row, we are collecting VBS offerings to build longhouses in Malaysia. Please consider setting a goal for your VBS to collect \$1,400 to provide a home for a family in Malaysia. The offerings received will purchase the building materials. Missions Mobilization will send the volunteer construction teams to provide the labor, alongside the Malaysian families. In the past six years, 608 decisions have been made for Christ and 371 homes have been built.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/MSLonghouse> for promo materials.
Contact Missions Mobilization at 601-292-3398 or
cmunn@mbcb.org for more information.

FREE 2018 YOUTH NIGHT

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.
Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."
— Galatians 5:1 —



**FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018
6:30-8:30 P.M.
MISSISSIPPI COLISEUM, JACKSON**

Speaker: JASON CURRY | Band: BROKEN VESSELS

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TOUR DATES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13 | 6:00 P.M.
First Baptist Church
900 High School Ave.
Columbia, MS 39429

THURSDAY, JUNE 14 | 6:30 P.M.
First Baptist Church
401 Goodyear Blvd.
Picayune, MS 39466

FRIDAY, JUNE 15 | 6:30 P.M.
Clarke-Venable Baptist Church
362 West Broad St.
Decatur, MS 39327

SATURDAY, JUNE 16 | 6:00 P.M.
Calvary Baptist Church
282 McCord St.
West Point, MS 39775

SUNDAY, JUNE 17 | 9:15 A.M.
West Jackson Street Baptist Church
1349 West Jackson St.
Tupelo, MS 38801

SUNDAY, JUNE 17 | 5:00 P.M.
Belden Baptist Church
4121 McCullough Blvd.
Belden, MS 38826

MONDAY, JUNE 18 | 6:30 P.M.
First Baptist Church
431 North State St.
Jackson, MS 39201

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Pray this day for...

April 20 - May 3, 2018

"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Pray for: **Eugenia Putnam**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Tracy Putnam**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **John & Deborah Royals**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through regional office support & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Jonathan & Bethany Sharp**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & community outreach/encounter.

Pray for: **George & Geraldine Smith**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Thomas & Janna Smith**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through regional office support & church planting.

Pray for: **Karl & Peggy Wallace**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through mission administration & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Regina White**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Charles & Shannon Worthy**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through community outreach/encounter.

Pray for: **James & Mary Adair**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Bethany Allen**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through community outreach/encounter.

Pray for: **David & Laurie Bledsoe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through general evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Matthew Burks**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through general evangelism.



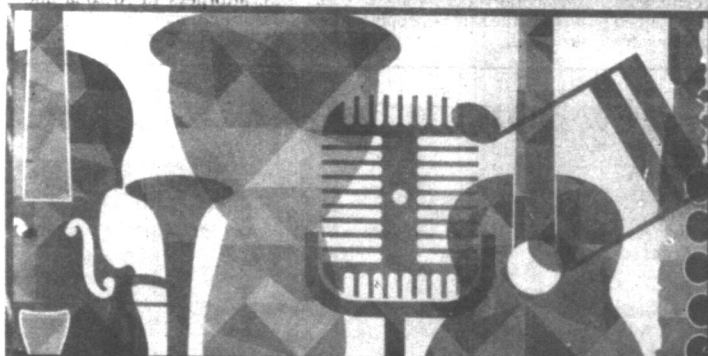
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5.8.18

McLaurin Heights Baptist Church

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Contact our Mission Strategy Department at 601-292-3231 or e-mail bbridges@mbcb.org for more information.

HOUSE TOPS

Feds seize notorious Backpage.com web site

WASHINGTON (BP) — Opponents of human trafficking have applauded the federal government's shutdown of Backpage.com, reportedly the leading online facilitator of the sex trade in the U.S.

An April 6 message at Backpage.com announced the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other government entities had seized the website and its affiliates "as part of an enforcement action." The FBI and the Justice Department have made no further announcements about the investigation.

The Internet now dominates the trafficking of adults and children for sexual purposes, and Backpage.com — a classified advertising company — is regarded as preeminent in drawing business from the trade. More than 73% of reports by the public to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children concern a Backpage.com ad, the center said in January 2017.

"Backpage is a sex-trafficking storefront masquerading as a website," Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Commission in Nashville, told Baptist Press before using an analogy from a classic movie.

"Every time these sites are called to account, they shrug their shoulders as if to say, 'Who us? We are shocked that there might be gambling going on at Casablanca.'"

"Vulnerable women and children are having their lives shredded by predators and those who empower them and who profit from them. It is

backpage.com and affiliated websites have been seized

as part of an enforcement action by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, with analytical assistance from the Joint Regional Intelligence Center.

Other agencies participating in and supporting the enforcement action include the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, the U.S. Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, the office of the California Attorney General, and the office of the Texas Attorney General.

Additional information will be provided at around 6:00 pm EST on Friday, April 6, by the U.S. Department of Justice, and all media inquiries should be directed to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Public Affairs at 202-514-2007 and press@usdoj.gov.

April 6, 2018

time for this society to get serious about the scourge of sex trafficking."

Polaris, a leading anti-trafficking organization, called the government action "a major victory and milestone in the fight against sex trafficking."

"Shutting down the largest online U.S. marketplace for sex trafficking will dramatically reduce the profitability of forcing people into the commercial sex trade, at least in the short term," said Polaris Chief Executive Officer Bradley Myles in a written statement.

"Traffickers will have to rethink their business models and sex buyers will face greater risk. The flow of easy money will slow and, as a result, fewer vulnerable people will be bought and sold against their will."

Donna Rice Hughes, president of the internet safety organization Enough Is Enough, described it as a "titanic victory" in a written message.

The government's seizure of Backpage came barely two weeks after Congress completed passage of legislation designed to hold accountable online sites

that facilitate sex trafficking. The Senate approved the bill in a 97-2 vote March 21 following the House of Representatives' adoption of the measure in a 388-25 roll call in late February.

U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to sign the bill soon.

If enacted, the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) would amend a 1996 anti-obscenity federal law to authorize the prosecution of websites that support the sale of people in the sex trade.

The proposal, which includes provisions from the Senate's Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA), also would clarify that trafficking victims have the right to bring civil action against such online sites as Backpage.com.

Websites involved in sex trafficking and prostitution quickly took precautionary measures after the Senate vote. The online platform Reddit, known as the "front page" of the internet, barred several sex-worker forums, and Craigslist, Cityvibe, and Erotic Review shut down their U.S. prostitution ads, according to reports.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Oh., SESTA's sponsor, called the seizure of Backpage.com "good news for victims and survivors of online sex trafficking. While this action is long overdue, it is a positive step forward in our efforts to hold accountable sex traffickers that sell women and children online."

However, the Women's March organization criticized the action against Backpage.com. On Twitter, march leaders called the shutdown "an absolute crisis for sex workers who rely on the site to safely get in touch with clients. Sex workers' rights are women's rights."

The seizure notice on Backpage.com said those participating in the action included not just the FBI but the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Justice Department's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, U.S. attorneys in Arizona and California, and the attorneys general of California and Texas.

Austin Baptists responded as city bombings continued

AUSTIN, Texas (BP) — The spate of bombings in Austin that had everyone in the city on "high alert" may be over after suspect Mark Anthony Conditt killed himself with an explosive on March 21 after running off the highway with police in hot pursuit.

The latest development left many Christian leaders thankful the situation didn't become far worse, said David Smith, executive director of Austin Association.

"Though we grieve for the families, I think the casualty count was as low as it was because of prayer," said Smith, who noted that Austin's existing network of pastors responded quickly to the crisis with unified prayer.

"I believe God allowed this guy to make enough mistakes that it kept things from being even more serious than they were."

The first bomb, a pipe bomb concealed in a package, killed

39-year-old Anthony Stephan House at his home March 2. On March 12, two more package bombs left 17-year-old Draylen Mason dead and two others injured.

A roadside bomb injured two young men March 18, and a package bomb injured a worker at a FedEx facility March 20.

The motive for the bombings is still unknown.

As it became clear that a serial bomber was responsible, Smith said the intensity "really picked up for folks" and affected the way Austin residents viewed everyday life.

"Yesterday we had our pastors' meeting at a local church, and we had not been there 10 minutes when the FedEx delivery guy showed up with a package," Smith said. The men froze for a second, and Smith's assistant asked what they should do.

"I thought, 'Wow, this is heavy,'" Smith said of the pack-

age that turned out to be a routine delivery. "Through all of this happening over the past few weeks I didn't sense panic on people's part as much as sadness, but it is definitely a heavy duty kind of thing."

In response to the attacks, pastors had rallied through Austin's Unceasing Prayer Movement, a network that reaches across denominational and racial lines to mobilize Christians to pray.

"I think that the fact that our city is organized already for prayer and working together puts us in a strong position to respond," said Kie Bowman, pastor of Hyde Park Church.

Because the "vast majority" of the city is unchurched, Austin has an "extremely strong ministerial alliance" that is committed to working together, Bowman said. "From mega-churches to church planters, we fellowship together, work together, and pray together so



FEAR RELIEVED — Austin (Texas) police suspect the man at right is Mark Anthony Conditt in disguise, dropping off a package at a FedEx facility in furtherance of his serial bombing campaign. Conditt killed himself with one of his own bombs as police closed in on him after a crash during a high-speed chase. (Uncredited photo)

when things like this happen, we organize extremely quickly."

Pastors also had planned a citywide prayer night in front of city hall March 26 to pray for law enforcement and a quick

end to the serial bombings, but after the suspect ended his life, the event was cancelled.

Bowman said he believed God had heard the prayers of Christians all over the city.

DISCIPLINE

cont. from p. 1

According to the phone survey of 1,000 Protestant senior pastors, 16% of pastors say their church has disciplined a member in the last year. That includes three percent in the last month, five percent in the last six months, and eight percent in the last year.

Fifty-five percent say no member has been disciplined during their time as pastor or before their tenure. Twenty-one percent say a member was disciplined three or more years ago. Five percent say there was a case of discipline in the last two years.

■ Pentecostal (29%), Holiness (23%), and Baptist pastors (19%) are most likely to say a church member was disciplined in the past year. Methodist (four percent) and Presbyterian/Reformed (nine percent) pastors are less likely.

Overall, 49% of evangelical pastors and 67% of mainline church pastors say they don't know of a case where someone was disciplined at their church.

LifeWay Research also asked pastors about the process of discipline in their churches. They said the responsibility lies with the pastor (eight percent), church elders (14%), trustees or board members (four percent), or church deacons (one percent). Fifty-one percent said two or more groups must agree.

Eighteen percent said there is no formal discipline process.

Pastors of churches of 100 or more attendees are more likely to say elders alone handle discipline (17%) than churches with 99 or fewer attendees (11%). African American pastors (21%) are more likely than white pastors (six percent) to say the pastor alone is responsible for church discipline.

Mainline pastors (24%) are more likely than evangelical pastors (15%) to say their church has no formal discipline policy.

McConnell noted some churches may have informal discipline processes, and some church members may leave rather than going through church discipline.

Where there is formal discipline, a group of church leaders often must agree for formal discipline to take place. The process is rarely arbitrary.

"There's some red tape involved for churches," he said. "It is not easy to be kicked out of a church."

For more information on the study, visit LifeWayResearch.com.

IMB

cont. from p. 1

the local pulpit. He is a teaching pastor at McLean Bible Church in northern Virginia, and has told trustees he will continue to serve at IMB until a new president is selected.

IMB trustee chairman Rick Dunbar, a physician and member of First Church, Madison, named a 16-person committee to find Platt's replacement during the trustees' Feb. 28-March 1 meeting in the Richmond, Va., area. IMB headquarters and training facilities are located in the Richmond area.

In addition to Pourciau, search committee members include:

■ Dunbar.

■ Andy Davis, senior pastor/elder at First Church, Durham, N.C. (vice-chair).

■ David Sills, professor of Christian missions and cultural anthropology at Southern Seminary in Louisville Ky. He is a former pastor of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, and a gradu-

ate of Belhaven College and Reformed Theological Seminary, both in Jackson.

■ Lisa Lovell, physical therapist and member of First Church, Fayetteville, Ar. She is currently serving as recording secretary of the IMB board of trustees.

■ Ken McLeMore, missions pastor of Liberty Church, Hampton, Va.

■ Nancy Patrick, licensed school psychologist and professor of special education. She is a member of Living Legacy Church in Hershey, Pa.

■ Will Payne, Fellowship of Christian Athletes campus director at Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y., and member of Central Church, Syracuse, N.Y.

■ Seth Polk, lead pastor of Cross Lanes Church in Cross Lanes, W.Va.

■ Bill Ricketts, retired pastor and member of Prince Avenue Church, Athens, Ga.

■ Tim Simpson, senior pastor of Greenridge Church, Clarksburg, Md. He is currently serving as first vice-chair of the IMB board of trustees.

■ Cindy Sneed, clinical laboratory scientist and member of North Phoenix Church, Phoenix.

■ Derek Spain, executive pastor of Hebron Church, Dacula, Ga.

■ Susan Bryant, president of the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and member of Graefenburg Church, Waddy, Ky.

■ Robert Welch, senior pastor of Rock Hill Church, Brownsville, Texas.

Duane Ostrem, an IMB field leader, will serve as a non-voting member to provide perspective from the mission field.

In addition to Dunbar, Mississippi members of the IMB board of trustees include Rob Futral, senior pastor of Broadmoor Church, Madison; and William H. "Opie" Hurst of Baldwin, director of Faith Counseling Ministries and its television operations in Tupelo.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **New Hope Church, Tupelo:** Revival, April 13-18. Sun., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m. Drew Gardner, speaker; Brent Sanders, worship leader. Lowell Johnson, pastor.

► **Neshoba Church, Union:** Revival, April 22-25. Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m. James Messer, speaker; Luke Howell, worship leader. (601) 938-0357.

► **East Columbia Church,**

Columbia: Revival, April 22-25. Sun., 5 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m. Jim Futral, speaker; Philip Alford, worship leader. Tim Morrison, pastor.

► **Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, April 22. Sun. School, 9:30 a.m. Special music with Marc and Ellie Whittington, 10:30 a.m. Message with Mark Wicker, 11:30 a.m. Noon meal to follow.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

YFX AB RCLAON ZV AF PEM, NCV ZEXP

AO XYYX ZVRYMOV EB OAF; ZMN NCV

OJALAN AO TABV ZVRYMOV EB

LAICNVEMOFVVO.

LEGYFO VAICN: NVF

Clue: R = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ephesians 5:2

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005



EVANGELIST CHRIS BROADHEAD

601.550.9565
chrisbroadhead5714@gmail.com

Evangelist Chris Broadhead is available for revivals, pulpit supply, or in any direction in which the Lord may lead. Bro. Broadhead is an evangelist who is committed to traditional, Holy Ghost, Bible based preaching and the conservative views of the Baptist doctrine. Bro. Broadhead is a member of Magnolia Baptist Church and is pursuing his degree in church ministries. He is married and resides in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He can be contacted by phone, text, or email at: 601.550.9565 or Chrisbroadhead5714@gmail.com

MS POSITIONS

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TEMPLE BAPTIST IN MYRTLE IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A PART TIME MUSIC MINISTER. Please E-mail resumes to pastor.donnie@hotmail.com or call him at 662-266-4229.

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Understanding Love • 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees... representatives from each of these groups often sought to trip Jesus up, to "catch Him in His words" (Mark 12:13 NKJV). On one occasion, after companies of Pharisees and Sadducees had both failed in such an attempt, a scribe (seemingly more noble than most of his cohorts) queried the Master. His question? "Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mark 12:28). Jesus responded by referencing – not one of the 10 commandments, as the man may have expected – but Deuteronomy 6:5. The searching words bring us up short. According to Jesus, the commandment God deems most important is an attitude that begins in the heart, and then envelops one's total being: "...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength..." (vs. 30). Then, referencing Leviticus 19:18, Jesus added, "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (vs. 31).

Today's focal verses from 1 Corinthians 13, often referred to as "the love chapter" of the Bible, correlate well with these Gospel and Old Testament references. The Apostle Paul had just finished a discussion of spiritual gifts, and he concludes that chapter and launches into this one by encouraging this congregation to desire spiritual gifts,

but adds, "And yet I show you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Necessity of Love

Yes, the "more excellent way" is the way of love. In the first two verses of chapter 13, he references several of the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 and other Scriptures, but points out that these gifts, if not accompanied by love, are useless. And even if he divested himself of all his worldly goods to benefit others, and went so far as sacrificing his very body, without love, Paul says, "it profits me nothing" (vs. 3).

Have you known someone like that? Someone who serves out of obligation or possibly to make himself look good, while it's obvious love is not the motivation? Have you been that person? When Paul says, "it profits me nothing," he could be referring to missing out on the blessing that comes to the one who serves with a loving spirit, instead of grudgingly.

Nature of Love

So what does love in working clothes look like? Since "God is love" (1 John 4:8), love reflects the character of God Himself. Look at the words the New Living Translation uses to describe a loving person: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being

wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always

hopeful, and endures through every circumstance" (vss. 4-7).

I have heard the challenge issued to substitute one's own name for every instance "love" is referenced in these verses. What a great exercise. We can ask ourselves, "Am I patient and kind? Does my daily walk show an absence of jealousy, pride, rudeness, and irritability? Am I quick to forgive and forget?" Seeing areas where we don't

measure up should cause us to consider how close we're living to the Lord Jesus Christ. He calls us to abide in Him, as a branch abides in a vine (John 15:4-5), and by so doing, we will bear much fruit. Galatians 5:22-23 lists spiritual "fruit" that is produced in a life controlled by the Holy Spirit; love heads the list.

Permanence of Love

In verses 8-13 of today's Scriptures, Paul compares the using of our spiritual gifts in serving others to the life and thoughts of a child. On this side of heaven, we understand things only "dimly" and "in part" (vs. 12 NKJV), as a child doesn't fully understand the ways of a mature adult. However, when "that which is perfect is come," then we "shall know just as [we are] also known." Instead of putting the main emphasis on gifts that will "fail," "cease," and "vanish away" (vs. 9), the Apostle urged his brothers and sisters in Corinth to also seek qualities that will "abide": faith, hope and love; and "the greatest of these is love" (vs. 13).

To put it succinctly... "Do to others as you would like them to do to you" (Luke 6:31 NLT). Love in its simplest form!

Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Explore the Bible

with Ann Maniscalco

Be Ready to Stand • Esther 2:5-10, 15-17

We often seek jobs, positions, and opportunities for our own benefit. We gravitate toward those jobs and responsibilities that we might feel especially skilled for and certainly the ones we'd enjoy. There's nothing wrong with that, but we need to realize that God has placed us in a specific situation – working a certain job, living in a particular location, or surrounded by different people – for a greater purpose: to point to Him and further His kingdom.

According to The Disciple's Study Bible (Christian Standard Bible), the events described in the book of Esther cover a ten-year period during the reign of Xerxes I, also known as Ahasuerus. He was an arrogant ruler, and when his queen refused to put herself on display during a lavish and drunken banquet, the king disposed her and launched an empire-wide search for a replacement. The quest for a new queen lasted four years. Esther was brought before Ahasuerus as part of this search. The king loved Esther – she won his favor and was selected as his new queen.

Even in tumultuous circumstances, recognize that God is actively at work (Esther 2:5-7).

Mordecai is named 58 times in this book, and seven times he's identified as a Jew, a part of the tribe of Benjamin. He is in Babylon because one of his ancestors,

Kish, was among the Jews taken to Babylon from Jerusalem, the account of which is found in 2 Kings 24. Later, the Jews were permitted to return home by King Cyrus of Persia, but Mordecai elected to stay behind. Mordecai was given an official job in the government and sat at the king's gate (Est. 2:21).

Esther was his cousin and adopted daughter. Mordecai probably was intrigued by Ahasuerus's search for a queen.

This was like a beauty contest; Mordecai was able to see all the women brought to the palace for Ahasuerus to consider. It's probable that Esther and Mordecai were posing as Persians instead of Jews. They didn't, for instance, observe kosher rules. And yet, God was at work. He overlooked the dishonesty of Mordecai and Esther and was able to still use them to accomplish His work.

Take advantage of new opportunities (Esther 2:8-10). Esther was taken into Ahasuerus's harem to await his choice of a queen. She was

in "competition" with many other women. Hegai, the eunuch, was responsible for the women in this harem, and she became his favorite. God can even use a harem-keeper! Esther was given special beauty treatments, a special diet, and other training on how to please the king. Esther was in waiting for at least twelve months – she was living a charmed life, at least in her own eyes, and in Mordecai's eyes.

At this juncture of the story, it's hard to

find much to commend about Mordecai or Esther. Esther, in effect, was being prepared to give sexual favors to the king, which Jewish law strictly forbade. She was keeping her identity secret, by Mordecai's direction. In the midst of all this behavior – and in spite of it – God was using Esther and Mordecai to further His own purposes, in spite of themselves. God was to use these two flawed individuals to ultimately keep the Jewish people alive.

Step into new roles and look for opportunities to further God's kingdom (Esther 2:15-17).

Esther did just exactly what Hegai told her to do. She was a hit with everyone. Already a natural beauty, Hegai's work with her over the months improved her already stunning looks.

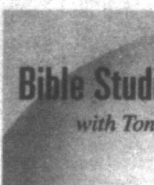
Ahasuerus was significantly impressed. He looked no further for a queen. He personally crowned her as the new queen in the place of Vashti. Understand that this is the hand of God in action. Had not Esther been put at the side of Ahasuerus, the whole nation of Israel would have been destroyed.

The king crowned Esther at the fourth banquet mentioned in the book – the Persians loved to party! He was so swept away that he even proclaimed a national holiday and gave gifts to all the people.

Esther's selection as queen is evidence of God's providence, and how He can even use the most unlikely of people to further His kingdom. God used the coronation of Esther to ultimately protect His people. The Jewish nation had to be preserved for God's will to be done.

In the book of Esther God is not mentioned, but He is the key figure in the story. He works through circumstances and opportunities to place everything in order so that His plans will be accomplished.

Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.



Bible Studies for Life

with Tony Martin



HYBELS

cont. from p. 1

that I did not intend. At times, it made people feel uncomfortable. I was blind to this dynamic for far too long."

He also apologized for reacting in anger when accused: "I sincerely wish now that my initial

response had been one of listening and humble reflection."

Hybels is stepping aside not only from the pastorate but also from hosting Willow Creek's Global Leadership Summit, a two-day event in August that reaches hundreds of thousands of leaders worldwide.

He emphasized that leaving was "my decision and mine alone,

prayerfully made," for the sake of the ministries caught up in the controversy surrounding him.

"They can't flourish to their full potential when the valuable time and energy of their leaders are divided," Hybels said.

After a time of reflection with counselors, Hybels said, he intends to return to Willow Creek as a member of the congregation.

"I feel the need to look deep inside myself and determine what God wants to teach me through all of this."

Last year, Hybels had announced plans to retire this fall. In a statement after the Tribune's story, Willow Creek said the church had full confidence in Hybels and that he would remain in his role as senior pastor until his

planned transition in October.

As Willow Creek's co-founding pastor, Hybels has been one of the most influential American evangelical leaders. The church, which is non-denominational, has grown from 125 people at its launch in 1975 to an attendance of 25,000 at eight Chicago-area locations today, according to the church's website.

Just for the Record



PARKWAY CHURCH, HOUSTON, ordained Jared Roberts to the Gospel ministry March 11. He is pictured with his wife Emily and pastor Randy Rinehart and wife Pam.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, Senior LIFE group hosted Sherry Coker for a piano concert on March 27. Coker performed her arrangements of older hymns, and shared the backgrounds of how and why the hymns were originally written. Anita Alexander is Senior LIFE director. Mike Burns, pastor.



PLEASANT GROVE CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, recently licensed Jason Case to preach. He is pictured with his wife Mary, Thomas Wicker, Steve Jackson, and Bendon Ginn.

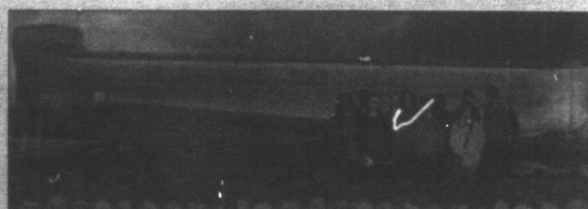
In other Church

News:

► **Springdale Church, Ripley**, will host the group Three Bridges from Brentwood, Tenn., on April 29 at 6 p.m. (662) 587-9559.



TUSCUMBIA CHURCH, BOONEVILLE, presented "In a Heartbeat," on March 24-25. Ben Parman, pastor. Kenneth Leslie, worship leader.



MT. OLIVE CHURCH youth toured the Ark and Creation Museum in Kentucky during spring break.



BOGUE CHITTO CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, recently welcomed new pastor Dane Hodges (back row, second from left). Pictured with Hodges are (back row, from left) John Hart, Gary Crosby, Wallace Swanson, Kenny Wallace, Tommy Busby, Chris Reed, Mel Luter, (front row, from left) Steve Yawn and youth minister Matthew Blackwell.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.